

Appl. No. 09/833,847
Response Dated Nov. 4, 2003
Reply to Office Action of 8/4/03

Specification Amendments

Please add the following new paragraph at Page 3, line 18:

51
Fig. 4 is a close-up view of attachment of snap shackles and other spring loaded locking mechanisms on the spreader bar.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at Page 4, line 1, with the following:

52
The apparatus comprises a movable hoist 4, having a retractable line 5, that is slidably engaged to a suspended track 6. It will be appreciated that said track permits said hoist to move longitudinally over a payload 7 positioned underneath. The apparatus further comprises a spreader bar 8 that is attachable to said retractable line of said hoist. The spreader bar has means 9 for attaching to the leading edge of a tarpaulin 10 or other cover that will be spread over payload 7 as will be described in more detail below. In a preferred embodiment, means 9 comprises what are commonly referred to in the industry as snap shackles 91, or other similar devices, that contain spring loaded locking mechanisms 92 that permit release by remote measures such as by pulling a rope properly attached to said shackle. The hoist 4 is powered by a means 11 operable from various positions, including from the ground level.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at Page 7, line 1, with the following:

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It will be appreciated that, even using the present invention, it might become necessary for the operator to climb and work on top of the payload. For instance, the operator might wish to ensure a smooth and secure spreading of the covering over the payload. This can sometimes occur when two tarpaulins are applied to obtain complete coverage over a payload of great length. The convergence of the two tarpaulins on top of the payload might sometimes require manual smoothing

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or securement. To provide safety to those individuals who choose to work on top of the payload in such instances, one alternative embodiment of the present invention further comprises tether line 23 suspended in general parallel fashion to track 6. Upon ascending flat bed trailer 22, an operator secures himself by connecting a safety cable 30 that is secured on one end to a harness worn by the operator and is slidably engaged on the other end to said tether line 23. It will be appreciated that by connecting himself to the tether line 23, an operator has substantial freedom to move around on top of the payload and is protected from falling should he trip or lose his balance.

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Drawings Corrections

The attached sheet of drawings is a correction in the nature of:

1. Addition of the "safety cable", now reference number 30, to Figure 3 (immediately above reference number 15, and attached to reference number 23).
2. Inclusion of an additional figure, being Figure 4, which shows the snap shackles (now reference number 91) and the spring loaded mechanism (now reference number 92).

ATTACHMENT: Corrected Replacement Figure 3 and Figure 4.